As your group travels, you can celebrate reaching various destinations. Below are some interesting notes about the states and capitals. Also, creative ideas are shared for physical activities to conduct, foods to sample, or small souvenirs to distribute. You may want to find or create postcards with local sites. Another fun idea is to contact the local chamber, a celebrity (Mickey Mouse, Tom Cruise), or a politician for a personalized note to be sent to the group.

We suggest you select just a few landmarks to celebrate along the way!

**Sacramento, California**
California is the most populous U.S. state with nearly 37 million people as of 2009. Take a tour of wine country. Watch for the state tree – the Redwood. Redwoods are the tallest trees growing up to 370 feet. Hike to the one that is 2,200 years old!
*Creative idea – sample different varieties of grapes*

**Carson City, Nevada**
It is a hike uphill from Sacramento at 20 feet to Carson City at 4730 feet. It is 740 miles or 1,480,000 steps round-trip if you want to go to Las Vegas and try your luck!
*Creative idea – distribute dice, cards, play money*

**Salem, Oregon**
Stop by Crater Lake National Park. This lake is known for its intense blue color and spectacular views. It was created when Mount Mazama erupted. With an average of 533 inches of snow per year, it gets some of the heaviest snowfalls in the country.
*Creative idea – distribute fake snow, viles of blue-colored water*

**Olympia, Washington**
Enjoy the great scenery of Mount St. Helens, Mount Rainier and the Olympic Mountains. The state is named for George Washington, our first president.
*Creative idea – sample Washington apples, distribute bags of ash*

**Boise, Idaho**
Potatoes are a major crop in the agricultural industry. Idaho is called the “Gem State.” While in Boise, stop by the Basque Museum and Cultural Center. You will cross the Bitterroot Mountains on your way to Helena.
*Creative idea – sample baked potato bar with variety of healthful toppings*

**Helena, Montana**
Montana, or “Big Sky Country,” is home to Glacier National Park. Montana is the fourth largest state. Be sure and watch out for the state animal along your walk – the grizzly bear. And Egg Mountain is the site of important dinosaur finds.
*Creative idea – Buy plastic eggs and insert a note inside one that entitles the bearer to a small prize*

**Bismarck, North Dakota**
Look for fish as you cross Lake Sakakawea. Check out the Missouri and Red Rivers. Don’t miss the opportunity to visit the Peace Garden. Grains are a big agricultural crop in North Dakota.
*Creative idea – sample some whole-grain dishes*
Pierre, South Dakota
Visit Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Also take in Wind Cave National Park and Badlands National Park. Tour a buffalo ranch.
*Creative idea – sample some lean buffalo meat*

St. Paul, Minnesota
Enjoy the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. For all you shoppers, use your walking shoes through the Mall of America over 520 stores, 400 live trees, 11,000 year-round employees, and a 1.2 million-gallon aquarium.
*Creative idea – distribute play money or small lunch bags decorated for shopping*

Madison, Wisconsin
Just southwest of Madison is the “mustard capital of the world.” Just 60 miles north of Madison (120 miles or 240,000 steps round-trip) you can check out a winery, the Circus World Museum, International Crane Foundation and the Wisconsin Dells (major recreation area).
*Creative idea – sample low-fat cheeses, distribute packets of mustard*

Springfield, Illinois
The Mississippi River makes up the western border of Illinois. Watch for the state bird, the cardinal. Cardinals like to eat seeds, insects, snails and maple syrup. Climb some of the fire towers built to serve as lookout fires in the vast vegetation.
*Creative idea – find a local fire tower to climb or climb stairs in the tallest building in your area*

Indianapolis, Indiana
In Indiana you will cross three main rivers, the Kankakee River, the Wabash River and the White River. Visit the speedway where they hold the Indianapolis 500!
*Creative idea – distribute miniature race cars*

Lansing, Michigan
Michigan is well-known for decades of car manufacturing. While in Michigan, take time to visit the four Great Lakes that touch its borders – Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, Lake Erie, and Lake Huron. If you want to catch Lake Ontario, take a side trip into Canada.
*Creative idea – distribute miniature automobiles*

Columbus, Ohio
Ohio is the birthplace of seven presidents. Take a tour of one of the many manufacturing plants for steel, cars, airplanes, rubber products, chemicals and plastics. Experience the Amish and Mennonite cultures.
*Creative idea – try to spend one day as the Amish, without automated transportation*

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Take a 94-mile (188 miles or 376,000 steps round-trip) trek to Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross’ home and Independence Hall. For a special treat, try a famous Philly cheese steak sandwich (you may need to split one with a friend).
*Creative idea – distribute miniature U.S. flags*

Albany, New York
A trip to New York would not be complete without a side trip (276 miles or 552,000 steps round-trip) to New York City, also called “The Big Apple.” Did you know that dairying is the state’s most important farming activity and that the first Yiddish newspaper was published in New York in 1885?
*Creative idea – serve apple slices with vanilla yogurt, sample matzo or Jewish rye bread*
Montpelier, Vermont
From Montpelier, you can see Mount Mansfield, the highest point in Vermont at 4,393 feet. Also take time to enjoy the Green Mountains, perhaps for some downhill or cross country skiing.

*Creative idea – sample some natural maple syrup, take a ski trip*

Augusta, Maine
A nice walk to Moosehead Lake and up into Ontario (300 miles or 600,000 steps round-trip) will allow you to see many sites of Maine. Look for and sample the state berry, the wild blueberry.

*Creative idea – sample some blueberries and New England clam chowder*

Concord, New Hampshire
At Concord, you are on the banks of the Merrimack River. At the Canterbury Shaker Village, you can experience 200 years of the Shaker way of life. Visit over 24 original buildings, see crafts made, and explore the botanical gardens and nature trails.

*Creative idea – distribute miniature baskets or brooms*

Boston, Massachusetts
You are at the lowest capital in the U.S. with an elevation of 20 feet. Massachusetts is called the “Bay State” and in Boston you are at Massachusetts Bay. Learn more about the Boston Tea Party. Take in a harbor cruise for whale watching or lighthouse touring.

*Creative idea – have a tea party*

Providence, Rhode Island
Rhode Island is the smallest state with just 1545 square miles. Its nickname is “Little Rhody.” While here, enjoy the sites of Narragansett Bay.

*Creative idea – check out local places to swim*

Hartford, Connecticut
Nicknamed the “Constitution State,” the state song is *Yankee Doodle*. Step your foot in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean or Long Island Sound. Find time to visit the home of writer Mark Twain.

*Creative idea – Using body alphabet, spell out the song title “Yankee Doodle”*

Trenton, New Jersey
Tour the Trenton War Memorial built in 1932 to commemorate the “war to end all wars.” It is a great community center with elaborate bronze fixtures, a tile fountain, and a blue terra cotta ceiling in the Memorial Court. Truck farmers and farmer’s markets are big here.

*Creative idea – visit a farmer’s market and discuss how to select produce*

Dover, Delaware
Delaware was the first state in the U.S., December 7, 1787. In downtown Dover is Legislative Hall, or “Leg Hall” to the locals. Horseshoe crabs are plentiful along the coast in the summer, and Fisher’s is a world-famous brand of popcorn.

*Creative idea – organize a game of horseshoes, serve popcorn with different flavorings such as cinnamon-sugar or chili powder*

Annapolis, Maryland
Cruise around the Chesapeake Bay, which runs up the center of the state. Watch for people crabbing or gathering oysters, and see if you can spot a Baltimore oriole, the state bird. You can take in a professional sporting event in Baltimore. In Annapolis walk the historic streets and tour the Naval Academy.

*Creative idea – distribute miniature toy crabs or strings of play pearls*
Charleston, West Virginia
Ride the Mountain State’s “New River Gorge” mystery train for spectacular sites. In spring, ride the Cherry Blossom excursion train to Washington, D.C.
*Creative idea – learn to dance the Charleston*

Richmond, Virginia
Virginia is the birth state of eight presidents. The state is divided into three zones: coastal plain, piedmont, and mountain (Blue Ridge). Be sure to walk part of the great Appalachian Trail.
*Creative idea – go on a guided trail hike with a local expert*

Raleigh, North Carolina
Take an additional 520,000 steps (260 miles round-trip) and visit the Outer Banks where you can tour several light houses. Don’t miss the museum and exhibits of the Wright Brothers’ great flight in Kitty Hawk.
*Creative idea – go outside and fly kites*

Columbia, South Carolina
Columbia was settled by Europeans in the early 1700s. It was named for Christopher Columbus and was South Carolina’s first planned city and the second planned city in the U.S. It is home to the South Carolina State Fair. Take a short side trip to Myrtle Beach (234 miles or 468,000 steps round trip).
*Creative ideas – distribute small shells or fair ribbons*

Tallahassee, Florida
Most of Florida borders on water including the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The state marine mammal is the manatee. They can be seen in aquariums as well as several natural habitats. Take a trip south to Everglades National Monument (726 miles or 1,452,000 steps round trip).
*Creative idea – make and sample some fresh-squeezed orange juice*

Atlanta, Georgia
Georgia is the “Peach State.” In Atlanta visit the Centennial Olympic Park, site of the 1996 Olympic Games and now a performing arts center. You can also see the King Center, the official living memorial dedicated to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King.
*Creative idea – sample fresh peaches, share favorite peach recipes*

Frankfort, Kentucky
For something different, try canoeing on guided or self-guided tours. Some of the many industries in Kentucky include tobacco, corn, horse raising, automobile and truck manufacturing, and whiskey manufacturing. Or if the time is right, cheer at the Kentucky Derby!
*Creative idea – distribute miniature horses, schedule horseback riding tour*

Nashville, Tennessee
Nashville is, of course, the home of country music. Take time to listen to some great music and visit the museums and theaters. Tennessee has seven state songs!
*Creative idea – learn some country dance steps*

Montgomery, Alabama
Keep your eyes open for the state insect, the Monarch Butterfly. The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is one of the ten largest in the world and the only American theater invited to fly the flag of England’s Royal Shakespeare Company.
*Creative idea – sample some blueberries and wild plums*
Jackson, Mississippi
The magnolia is the state flower and state tree. A historic downtown walking tour in Jackson includes the Governor’s Mansion, Old Capital Museum, War Memorial Building, and Mississippi Department of Archives and History.
*Creative idea – prepare and sample greens (collard, spinach, dandelion) and cornbread*

Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Walk down to New Orleans at an elevation of 8 feet (152 miles or 304,000 steps round trip). Celebrate Mardi Gras in style! Visit the French Quarter and Bourbon Street. The most famous saying here is *Laissez les bons temps rouler* – Let the good times roll!
*Creative idea – distribute Mardi Gras beads or masks*

Little Rock, Arkansas
Check out some of the major industries in Arkansas including chickens, soybeans, rice, cotton, paper products, wood products (furniture), electronic equipment, and aluminum and diamond mining.
*Creative idea – sample soy-based foods such as tofu and soy milk*

Jefferson City, Missouri
In the “Show Me” state, take a side trip to St. Louis (210 miles or 420,000 steps round trip). St. Louis was the gateway to the west for many western settlers. Go up in the famous Arch – the tallest man-made monument in the U.S. From the top you will have a spectacular view. Don’t miss the Lewis and Clark exhibits!
*Creative ideas – prepare camp-style foods in tribute to Lewis and Clark*

Des Moines, Iowa
In Des Moines, visit the Wallace House, an 1880’s Italianate Victorian style home. Learn about the Wallace family contributions including helping to establish Iowa 4-H and Extension programs and having a family member serve as Vice-President from 1941-1945. Strawberry Point is home to the world’s largest strawberry.
*Creative idea – serve fresh strawberries or a strawberry smoothie*

Lincoln, Nebraska
Interested in a few museums? In and around Lincoln, check out the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln Children’s Museum, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and the Strategic Air and Space Museum.
*Creative idea – sample fresh corn prepared a variety of ways*

Topeka, Kansas
Topeka lies in the Sunflower State. The state song is Home on the Range. Visit Brown vs. Board of Education site established to commemorate the landmark Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, ending segregation in public schools.
*Creative idea – sample sunflower seeds*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Take in a musical – Oklahoma! The Oklahoma City Zoo features diverse and fascinating animal and plant collects. Okmulgee is home to the Pecan Festival. And did you know that an Oklahoman (Sylvan Goldman) invented the shopping cart?
*Creative idea – crack and enjoy pecans in the shell, conduct a walk-and-learn tour in a local grocery store*

Austin, Texas
Texas is the second biggest and second most populated state. The state motto is friendship. Make time for a little history tour to the Alamo.
*Creative idea – plan a Texas-style BBQ*
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Santa Fe is the highest capital in the U.S. at 6,989 feet. Watch for the state bird, the Road Runner (beep-beep). Enjoy incredible desert vistas.

*Creative idea – sample flat bread and pinto beans prepared different ways, distribute miniature aliens from Roswell*

Denver, Colorado
At a mile high, Denver is the home to the Colorado Rockies baseball team and Denver Broncos football team. Visit Rocky Mountain National Park, Mesa Verde National Park and Dinosaur National Monument. Colorado Springs is home to the Olympic Training Center, and Colorado grows some of the world’s best melons.

*Creative idea – serve melon chunks, organize a walking relay race*

Cheyenne, Wyoming
Cheyenne is home of Frontier Days, known as the “Daddy of ‘em All” to rodeo fans. While in Wyoming, take a walk to Yellowstone National Park (800 miles or 1,600,000 steps round-trip) to see Old Faithful, Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone Falls and the mud pots.

*Creative idea – distribute miniature cowboy hats*

Salt Lake City, Utah
Your trip would not be complete without visiting the Great Salt Lake and the Great Salt Lake Desert. The city is situated on land once covered by the prehistoric Lake Bonneville. Eastern and northern portions of the city are located on a series of terraces, or former beaches, known locally as “the benches.” Rainbow Bridge is the world’s largest natural rock span.

*Creative idea – serve a fruit bowl with rainbow colors (strawberries, kiwis, oranges, pineapple, blueberries, grapes, etc.)*

Phoenix, Arizona
The Arizona flag features 13 yellow and red rays to represent the sun’s rays and the 13 original colonies of the U.S. The copper star in the middle represents copper mining since Arizona produces more copper than any other state. Turquoise is the state gemstone. While in Arizona, look for the Saguaro cactus plant.

*Creative idea – distribute new pennies or toy turquoise jewelry*

Honolulu, Hawaii
Hawaii was the 50th state in the U.S., August 21, 1959. The flag’s stripes represent the eight islands of Hawaii – Lanai, Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, Oahu, Kauai, Niihau, and Kahoolawe. The highest point is Mauna Kea at 13,796 feet.

*Creative idea – have a hula dancing class*

Juneau, Alaska
Alaska, called “The Last Frontier,” is the biggest state with 656,425 square miles. Oil is the major industry. Take a small detour north to Barrow and you will be in the Artic Circle (2202 miles or 4,404,000 steps round trip). Watch for the state land mammal, the moose, and the state mineral, gold.

*Creative idea – distribute miniature moose*